

known domestic abusers were denied access to dangerous firearms because of background checks required by the 1994 Brady Act.

Unfortunately, not all firearms transactions are subject to a background check. The law requires background checks only for those transactions that involve a federally licensed firearms dealer. According to the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence "two out of every five guns acquired in the United States; including guns bought at gun shows, through classified ads, and between individuals; change hands without a background check." The Coalition to Stop Gun Violence also estimates that "extending criminal background checks to all gun transactions in the United States could prevent nearly 120,000 additional illegal gun sales every year."

It is important that we do not infringe on the rights of law-abiding citizens. However, with those rights in mind and protected, we should not allow those with a violent or serious criminal record to acquire dangerous firearms. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of commonsense gun safety legislation, such as the 1994 Brady Act, that will make our nation safer.

#### AIR FORCE ACADEMY

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, in an era when college football players are almost universally derided as troublemakers, stories about football players who become leaders and role models off the field are indeed hard to find. One such leader currently exists at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Earlier this week the Air Force Academy announced that Andy Gray, a senior cadet, has been selected to take over as the commander of the entire 4,000-strong cadet wing next semester. In this position, Andy will serve as the chief liaison between the academy's leadership and the cadet student body, akin to a student body president.

However, Andy is different than the average student body president. He has received extensive leadership training along with his fellow cadets. He has endured the rigorous cadet schedule of academics and military training. And, he has done it all while excelling as a member of the NCAA Division One Air Force Academy Falcon football team.

Andy is only the sixth football player to be chosen for this leadership role, and the first in 16 years. The last academy athlete to serve as the cadet wing commander was Delavane Diaz who played volleyball for the Falcons in 2003.

Andy Gray entered the academy in 2000 and played quarterback and defensive safety for much of his cadet career. In the fall of 2004, he was No. 1 on the depth chart as quarterback for the Falcons. This past season he played safety and had a big interception in the Air Force Academy's victory over UNLV.

Becoming a cadet wing commander is not easy and requires candidates to go through a rigorous screening process. Only the top two cadets from each of the academy's 35 squadrons are nominated to be considered. Then the pool is narrowed to 20. Each of the surviving candidates is closely interviewed by a board that includes members of the academy's leadership.

I commend Andy for his selection to be the academy's cadet wing commander. This selection is a real honor for him, and I know he will not take his new responsibilities lightly. I wish Andy the best as he takes up this important leadership position.

I also applaud the academy's football coach, Fisher DeBerry, for being such an outstanding role model for cadets like Andy. Coach DeBerry is a man of character who, for over 22 years, has turned hundreds of cadets into leaders while running a top-notch football program. I look forward to seeing in the future many more Academy football players become leaders in our Air Force.

#### THE SITUATION IN NEPAL

Mr. LEAHY. It may seem strange that on a day when the Congress is debating the budget resolution, I would be asking the Senate to turn its attention for a moment to the remote and tiny nation of Nepal.

I do so because for the past several years, a ruthless Maoist insurgency and a corrupt, repressive monarchy have brought that impoverished but breathtakingly beautiful country to the brink of disaster. It is important for the Nepalese people to know that while they may live half a world away, the difficulties they are facing have not gone unnoticed by the U.S. Congress.

It has been almost 9 months since Nepal's King Gyanendra dismissed the multiparty government, suspended civil liberties, and arrested the prime minister along with other opposition political leaders, human rights defenders, prodemocracy student activists, and journalists.

The king's explanation was that democracy had failed to solve the Maoist problem. He said that he would take care of it himself and then restore democracy after 3 years.

It is true that Nepal's nascent democracy had not solved the Maoist problem. Neither had the king. In the 4½ years since King Gyanendra assumed the throne and became commander in chief of the Nepalese army, the Maoists have grown from a minor irritant to a national menace. While the Maoists use threats and violence to extort money and property and they abduct children from poor Nepalese villagers, the army often brutalizes those same people for suspicion of supporting the Maoists. Like most armed conflicts, defenseless civilians are caught in the middle.

What the Nepalese people desire most is peace. Despite the king's autocratic

maneuvers on February 1, many would have given him the benefit of the doubt if he had a workable plan to quickly end the conflict. Nine months later, it is clear that he does not. One can only wonder why King Gyanendra thought that he could defeat the Maoists by dissolving the government, curtailing civil liberties, and surrounding himself with a clique of elderly advisers from the discredited, feudalistic Panchayat era.

The United States, Great Britain, and India criticized the king's actions and have urged him to negotiate with Nepal's political parties to restore democratic government. Unfortunately, although he has released most political prisoners and reinstated some civil liberties, the king has increasingly behaved like a despot who is determined to consolidate his own power.

In the meantime, the Maoists declared a ceasefire. The violence has reportedly decreased, although abductions and extortions have continued apace. Whether the ceasefire is a sinister ploy or a sincere overture for peace may never be known, however, because it is due to expire next month and neither the king nor the army has indicated a willingness to reciprocate.

Against this disheartening backdrop, the Congress, on November 10, 2005, approved my amendment to impose new restrictions on military aid for Nepal. On November 14, President Bush signed it into law. I want to briefly review what we did, and why.

The amendment says that before the Nepalese army can receive U.S. aid, the Secretary of State must certify that the Government of Nepal has "restored civil liberties, is protecting human rights, and has demonstrated, through dialogue with Nepal's political parties, a commitment to a clear timetable to restore multi-part democratic government consistent with the 1990 Nepalese Constitution."

This builds on an amendment that was adopted last year, which required the Secretary of State to certify that the Nepalese army was providing unimpeded access to places of detention and cooperating with the National Human Rights Commission, NHRC, to resolve security related cases of people in custody. Unfortunately, the Secretary was not able to make the certification. Not only were the NHRC's members replaced through a process that was contrary to Nepal's constitution, the International Committee of the Red Cross suspended its visits to military detention centers because it was denied the free access it requires.

The Nepalese Government objects to any conditions on U.S. aid, arguing that the army needs help to fight the Maoists. The army does need help, but it also needs to respect the law and the rights of the Nepalese people. The Congress took this action only after it could no longer ignore the pattern of arbitrary arrests, disappearances, torture and extrajudicial killings by the army. The army's abusive conduct,